



King County

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

Solid Waste Division

TALES FROM THE WASTE-LESS LAND

Master Recycler Composter (MRC) Newsletter

Spring 2004

Go Natural!



For the past six years, King County has partnered with other governmental agencies to promote natural yard care. Initially, we had a "Grasscycling Gives You Mower for Less" program, and sold discounted electric mulching and push mowers at events. Recently, we have partnered with lawn and garden centers to offer the discounted mowers as well as other discounted natural yard care products available in stores. The Home Depot and Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse have been strong supporters of the program, along with a number of smaller independent retailers.

Northwest Natural Yard Days are Here!

This year, both Home Depot and Lowe's are holding the same discounted sales on mowers (and other products) at all their stores in: Whatcom, Kitsap, Skagit, Snohomish, Pierce and Thurston counties. This means that the same discounts shoppers get in our program, they can get in these other areas. The program began April 1st, and lasts through May 31st. The following items will be discounted:

- Hand weed pullers
- Push lawn mowers
- Electric mulching mowers
 - Organic "slow-release" fertilizer
 - Compost
 - Soaker hoses
- Water timers
- Less toxic moss control
- Less toxic slug control
- Insecticidal soap

We promote these products as part of our 5-step natural yard care messages (see <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/swd/resrecy/composting/naturalyardbooklet.asp> for additional details on the following):

- 1 Build healthy soil with compost and mulch
- 2 Plant right for your site
- 3 Practice smart watering
- 4 Think twice before using pesticides
- 5 Practice natural lawn care.

The list of products and the retail locations throughout western Washington can be found on the King County web site www.metrokc.gov. Click on the Northwest Natural Yard Days icon for information.

In addition, keep your eyes peeled for in-store promotional banners, displays, shelf signs and brochures. Visitors to Home Depot stores will see a stand-up likeness of Ciscoe Morris (left), renowned gardening celebrity, to call attention to the promotion.

Oh, la la!!!!

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Upcoming Outreach Opportunities

Spring, Spring, Spring: One of the best - and busiest - times to be an MRC! Below are multiple opportunities for you to get involved in your communities this season, whether it's at a fair teaching the public how to compost or a special collection event where residents are looking for answers to recycling questions. Your help is greatly appreciated by residents all over King County and the MRC program! Also, feel free to be creative when designing your own outreach opportunities. Just be sure to check in with the MRC Volunteer Coordinator at 206-343-8505 about your idea in advance and record your hours on an outreach form located on the MRC website or by calling the hotline at 206-343-8505.

You can sign up for shifts online, find out about additional MRC outreach events, enter your hours, or download a blank outreach form online at www.mrcvolunteer.org (note the new MRC web address). Sign up today!

Great "behind the scenes" volunteer opportunity through the end of the school year and/or for the fall semester 2004: Help distribute and post signs in classrooms on weekdays at public and private schools in King County to assist with setting up and improving their recycling programs. MRCs from the Northshore area (Bothell, Woodinville) are especially needed. Contact Sam Wilder at 206-763-0739 for specifics.

Friday, April 16: Blooming Burien Plant Sale. MRCs will staff an education table with a focus on



composting and natural yard care. We will have a demonstration worm bin.

MRCs will also provide composting demonstrations with yard waste bins being sold on site. SHIFTS:

11:30am-3:30pm (2 MRCs) & 3:30-7pm (2 MRCs).

Saturday, April 17:

Northshore Utility's Annual Garden Fair. MRCs will spread the word about composting and natural yard care at this very well attended annual event. SHIFTS: 9am-12pm (1 MRC) & 12-3pm (1 MRC).

Saturday, April 17: Blooming Burien Plant Sale.

SHIFTS: 9:30am-12:30pm (2 MRCs), 12:30-3:30pm (2 MRCs) & 3:30-7pm (2 MRCs).

Saturday, April 24: SeaTac Special Recycling Event. Who has the answer to residents' recycling questions? You do!

SHIFTS: 9am-12pm (2 MRCs) & 12-3pm (1 MRC).

Saturday, May 1: Tukwila Backyard Wildlife Fair. Give composting demonstrations and staff education table.

SHIFTS: 10am-12:30pm & 12:30-3pm at Tukwila Community Center, compost demo site (2 MRCs per shift).

Saturday, May 8: SeaTac Yard Debris Collection Event. This time the questions will be about yard waste composting.

SHIFT: 12-3pm (1 MRC).

Saturday, May 22: Auburn Neighborhood Clean-up Campaign.

SHIFTS: 9am-12pm (2 MRCs) & 12-3pm (2 MRCs).

Saturday, May 29: Molbak's Nursery Question & Answer Session. SHIFT: 10am-12pm (2 MRCs).

Saturday, June 12: Molbak's Nursery Q&A Session. SHIFT: 10am-12pm (2 MRCs).

April & May (flexible schedule):

MRCs have the opportunity again to help with King County's annual Northwest Natural Yard Days (NNYD) campaign. MRCs will be asked to "adopt" local nurseries or box stores (Home Depot's & Lowe's) that have agreed to participate in this year's NNYD events. MRCs will attend a volunteer training (date to be determined) and then visit your adopted store(s) on your own schedule, for about 15-45 minutes every other week through the months of April & May. MRCs will be the link between retail staff and the NNYD program. The following list of stores is subject to change, but is mostly complete. Please sign up for 1-3 of the closest stores to you, and we will describe your "adoptive" duties shortly:

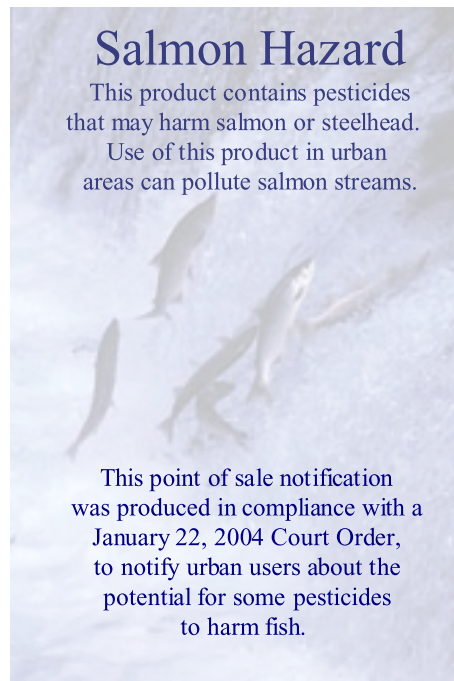
- Oriental Garden Center-Federal Way
- Home Depot-Bothell
- Home Depot-Federal Way
- Lowe's-Federal Way
- Home Depot-Issaquah
- Lowe's-Issaquah
- Home Depot-Bellevue
- Lowe's-Bellevue
- Home Depot-Redmond
- Home Depot-Tukwila
- Lowe's-Tukwila
- Home Depot-Auburn
- Home Depot-Kent
- Lowe's-Auburn
- Home Depot-Tacoma
- Lowe's-Tacoma

Federal Pesticide Ruling

This January, a federal judge in Seattle restricted the use of 38 pesticides near salmon streams in Washington, Oregon and California based on a lawsuit brought by environmental groups arguing that even tiny amounts of chemicals in rivers harm salmon.

Judge John Coughenour restricted the use of the pesticides — ranging from agricultural sprays to some household weed-killers — within 20 yards of the waters until the Environmental Protection Agency determines whether they are likely to harm protected fish. He also banned aerial spraying of the pesticides, except for public health reasons such as controlling mosquitoes, within 100 yards of salmon-bearing waterways.

How the ban will be enforced is still unclear and awareness among homeowners is low. Consumer awareness probably will rise when court-mandated “salmon hazard” warnings appear on shelves next to some products by April 5 at lawn-and-garden stores in some cities (see image to the right). While there are dozens of pesticides on the restricted use list, the judge ordered the EPA to develop the warning for products with seven specific pesticides that may affect home gardeners as they are found in common products. These are: 2, 4-D, Acephate, Carbaryl,



Chlorothalonil, Malathion, Pendimethalin, Trifluralin. People should be aware that 2, 4-D is one of the ingredients in most weed-and-feed products. 2, 4-D is a broad spectrum weed killer mixed in with a fertilizer to make many common “weed-n-feed” products. According to pesticide application rules, weed and feed applications can only be done twice a year. Statistics show that homeowners often use five to ten times more chemicals per acre on their lawns than farmers use on agricultural land!

A summary flyer on the pesticide issue is enclosed within this newsletter. In addition to the seven pesticides listed above, Diazinon is listed on the flyer as an example of a pesticide that is affected by the recent court ruling. Diazinon is already prohibited and is not available. However, with Diazinon prohibited, we are seeing increased use of Carbaryl. Carbaryl is not prohibited in the Puget Sound area, but is on the list for southern Washington. In addition to its targeted uses, Carbaryl kills bees.

On March 17, a coalition of pesticide makers and farm groups in Oregon, Washington and California sought to block implementation of the federal court order (http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/165301_pesticide18.html). The EPA has not decided which side to join over the appeal. Keep your eyes open for further developments on this topic and continue to encourage natural yard care principles! For more detailed information, visit http://www.watoxics.org/pages/root.aspx?xsl=release&source=press/pr_2004_01_22

Looking for Information on How to Prepare Your Lawn and Garden This Spring?

Check out the **NORTHWEST GARDENING CONNECTION WEBSITE**, located at <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/dss/gardening/index.cfm>. Visit the site to view a schedule of upcoming garden events, learn about the latest hot gardening topics, and sign-up to receive regular email updates from your local gardening experts!

New MRC Website Address!

The MRC program is proud to announce that the MRC Volunteer Resource site is now easier to reach!! You will no longer need to memorize a long, complicated web address to access the wealth of MRC program information. The MRC website has moved to **www.mrcvolunteer.org**. Please update your address books and online links. If you have trouble accessing the site or have forgotten your login and password, please call the MRC Hotline at 206-343-8505.

Happy browsing!

Advanced Training Held

Earlier this winter, 18 of your fellow MRCs participated in a 12-hour advanced training on **Household Hazardous Waste**. Local experts from King County, Washington Toxics Coalition and WSU Extension led the training which covered household hazardous waste priorities in King County, handling, processing and disposal of household hazardous waste, and tools for educating the public.

A highlight of the training included an excellent presentation by Philip Dickey of Washington Toxics Coalition on the issues of pesticide toxicity in children. Did you know that strawberries rank #1 as a food found to be the most contaminated



with pesticides? For the full list of fruits and vegetable ranked, visit <http://www.foodnews.org/walletguide.php>. This issue sure highlights the importance of supporting local sustainable farms - where you know you're getting safe food for you and your family.

Another highlight of the program was viewing the documentary *Blue Vinyl* (<http://www.bluevinyl.org>). *Blue Vinyl*, which has won numerous awards and was recently nominated for two Emmys for Best Documentary and Best Research Film, is a toxic comedy look at vinyl, the world's second largest selling plastic. With humor, hope and a piece of vinyl siding

firmly in hand, Peabody Award-winning filmmakers travel from an American hometown to America's vinyl manufacturing capital and beyond in search of answers about the nature of polyvinyl chloride (PVC). The film's funny but sobering message hit home with MRCs. MRCs can borrow the video from the Solid Waste Division by calling Kinley Deller at 206-296-4434.

The 2003 Advanced Training was a success in many ways and a number of participants are already hard at work volunteering extra hours specifically on HHW issues. Be watching for part 2 of this advanced training topic this Fall and we hope you'll join us for all of our supplemental education opportunities coming up this year.

MRC Annual Meeting Recap

On January 29th, an amazing group of 30 MRCs braved the stormy weather and came together in Issaquah to share volunteer recognition, new information, volunteer opportunities, continuing education and.... pizza! In addition to the regular features of the annual meeting, this year's event featured guest speaker Kim Ducote of RABANCO Recycling, speaking on expanded commingled recycling in King County. More and more subur-

ban cities in King County have been moving to expanded commingled recycling, making the ins and outs of recycling easier to understand and more convenient for the average consumer.

Why expanded commingled you ask? Expanded commingled is a recycling program that requires less sorting by the consumer. According to Kim, research shows that when sorting is not required, recycling levels in-

crease. Residential and commercial recyclers want a simple recycling program. Sorting into different bins is confusing, and often when in doubt - they throw it out! A simpler system equals higher participation levels and less contamination - which results in more of the right type of material being recycled. Also, recycling trucks can hold more commingled materials, which equals fewer trips to "tip" the material at the recycling center and less truck traffic on the road. One recycling bin also takes up less room. After introducing the commingled system to businesses, garbage volumes have been reduced by 40% or more!

Kim's presentation was excellent. Her contagious enthusiasm inspired us all to keep up the good work - which many MRCs planned to do as they signed up for outreach opportunities before they left for the evening. The annual meeting was a fun event and a great kick-off to MRC outreach for 2004!

New Hours at Solid Waste Disposal Facilities, Effective April 1, 2004

Hours of operation have changed at the Cedar Falls Drop Box, Enumclaw and Vashon Transfer Stations. This adjustment in service hours is being done to improve efficiency while keeping King County's disposal rates the lowest in the region. Visit <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/swd> for more information.



If you would like to highlight an MRC for a job well done, this is the place. Call the hotline with your nominations (206-343-8505)!

Master Recycler Composters

In the Sun

At the 2004 annual meeting, the MRC program recognized those volunteers who have contributed outreach hours above and beyond our expectations. The program already recognizes those MRCs who conduct over 100 outreach hours with a complimentary MRC sweatshirt, but as MRCs give back more and more hours, we are also recognizing those volunteers who reach milestones well over 100 hours. Last year we had our first MRC volunteer record over 400 outreach hours - wow, that's a lot of hours!! The program now recognizes MRCs

who reach 200, 300, and 400 hours of outreach with the following tokens of our appreciation:

- 200 Hours – MRC baseball hat made with recycled-content materials.
- 300 Hours – Green food waste bucket designed to conveniently hold food scraps in your kitchen before going into the compost bin.
- 400 Hours – Recycled-content fleece vest with MRC logo.

THANK YOU to all of you for your devotion to the MRC program. We'd like to extend an extra special

thanks to those MRCs we recognized at the 2004 Annual meeting:

Frances Pieper (over 400 hours)

Paul Martin (over 300 hours)

Nancy Hovan (over 200 hours)

Annette Gomez (over 200 hours)

Ken Johnson (over 200 hours)

Deb Stuart (over 100 hours)

Beverly Harrelson (over 100 hours)

Suzanne Bagdon (over 100 hours)

Julie Malgesini (over 100 hours)

Keep up the great work and don't forget to turn in your outreach hours (that's the only way we can find out your total hours given back to the program). You can download an outreach form or enter your hours online at www.mrcvolunteer.org.

Too Good For Moss???

Submitted by Deborah Stuart, Class 23

In September 2003, Denise Novotny placed a want ad for a used 50-gallon hot water heater on the local waste exchange website "Too Good To Toss" (<http://www.2good2toss.com/>). Shortly thereafter, she received a few emails from people wanting to unload their deceased hot water heaters, but Denise needed one without leaks for a solar hot water heater project. Most of the potential donators were indifferent to the solar aspect of her project. One person even told her where she could find a moss-covered one at the side of a Washington State highway! Yet one day, she received an email which began..." *I would be honored to recycle my hot water heater for your project.*" That one caught her eye and she responded. The correspondent was MRC Deb Stuart (Class 23), whose youthful fascination for solar and renewable



MRC Deb Stuart (right) happily chatting with Denise Novotny's about solar energy and Denise's solar energy installation business.

energy sources led her to enroll at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as an Energy Planning graduate student. Deb had a hot water heater that was available as a result of a remodeling project in her home. Deb had considered alternative fates for the water heater including use as a bar-b-cue, a meat smoker or as a yard waste-composting bin, but gave the water heater instead to Denise for her solar water heater project.

You may refer to numerous books, web sites and other resources for further information on converting your hot water heater for a similar use: this technology has been around for many, many years! The original plan for this water heater was based on Anthony Stoppiello's batch water heater plans. Check them out at <http://www.networkearth.org/naturalbuilding/heater.html> or contact him at 206-642-4256.

MRC Volunteers Help Out at Smart Shopping Scavenger Hunt

**Submitted by Andrea Imler,
Cascadia Consulting Group**

On November 15th, 2003, seven MRCs helped over 100 county-wide teens in a smart shopping scavenger hunt located at Northgate Mall in Seattle. The event was part of a national campaign, *Be Different, Live Different, Buy Different—Make a Difference*, where students learn about “buying different” the fun way.

Students tracked down stores that sell environmentally friendly products such as organic cotton T-shirts, and stores with environmentally and socially responsible practices. Sponsored by the Center for a New American Dream (New Dream) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the scavenger hunt was a unique opportunity for kids to help connect the dots between their concerns about the environment and the fact that by “buying different” they can make a difference. Local organizations Sustainable Seattle and the Sustainable Style Foundation partnered with WWF and New Dream to bring the “I Buy Different” Scavenger Hunt to Seattle.

MRC volunteered as storefront monitors, stamping booklets or “passports” for the teens once they found the environmentally friendly product or service within the store. At the end of the event, young people who had gathered every store stamp were eligible for environmentally friendly prizes such as passes to Woodland Park Zoo and a trip to the 2004 Environmental Media Awards in Hollywood. Everyone had a great time and the young people went home with a new outlook on shopping. Thanks to all the MRCs who helped make this event a success!

For more information about this

event or other sustainability-related topics, check out these websites:

- Sustainable Seattle – www.sustainableseattle.org
- Sustainable Style Foundation – www.sustainablestyle.org
- Be Different, Live Different, Buy Different – Make a Difference – www.ibuydifferent.org
- World Wildlife Fund - <http://www.worldwildlife.org/>
- Center for a New American Dream – www.newdream.org
- A New Path Forward: Action Plan for a Sustainable Washington - <http://www.sustainableseattle.org/sustpanel/ANewPathForwardActionPlan.pdf>

So What Exactly *IS* Sustainability?

Books, websites, and magazines often define sustainability in different terms. One of the most widely used definitions in the world of sustainability is:

“Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Defined by the Brundtland Commission 1987)

Those “needs” the Brundtland Commission refer to are the three E’s of sustainability—*environment*, *economics*, and *equity* (or social well-being). How exactly can we meet those “needs”? For environment, we can remember our three R’s: reduce our use of natural resources, reuse what we can, and recycle the rest. For economics, we can look towards tax incentives on “green initiatives”, such as a tax break for hybrid vehicles, or investing in clean energy. And finally, to foster equity, we can engage communities and promote equal access to opportunities and educational programs that promote caring for the resources essential to economic, environmental, and social well-being.

As you can see, sustainability isn’t simply about keeping something going or just about the environment—sustainability can be found in every facet of one’s life. As a report produced by Governor Locke’s Sustainable Washington Advisory Panel put it, “*sustainability is the application of the golden rule from generation to generation.*”

Environmentally-friendly Business Demonstrates it’s Good for the Bottom Line!

Read all about a local dry cleaner that switched from using the traditional cleaning agent, perchloroethylene — a water and air pollutant and possible carcinogen known as perc — to more environmentally friendly cleaning systems (http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/business/technology/2001859055_dryclean17.html). The new methods — which use hydrocarbon solvents, liquefied silicone-based detergents and liquid carbon dioxide — are helping dry cleaners to attract more customers, reduce costs, pollute less and make their workplaces healthier.

Legislation Requires Study of Solutions for Electronic Waste

On March 11, the Washington State legislature sent a bill (ESHB 2488) to Governor Locke for his signature that requires the Department of Ecology (Ecology) to study the issue of how to manage used electronic products such as TVs, computers and peripherals. These products contain toxic metals, glass and plastics that can be recycled or reused, rather than disposed in the landfill.

In early January 2004, Representative Cooper introduced HB 2488, a comprehensive "product stewardship" bill that required manufacturers to develop plans for financing, collecting and recycling e-waste. Product stewardship is the concept that manufacturers of products take responsibility for minimizing the product's environmental impact throughout all stages of the product's life cycle – including when the product is no longer needed by the consumer.

Under this scenario, the manufacturers could develop a system whereby the consumer pays a small

fee upon purchase of the product to cover the cost of recycling. When the product is no longer needed it could be taken to a recycling center or back to the retailer for recycling. Currently, most people get rid of their computers by donating them to charities. Many of the donations include broken equipment the charities can't sell and must pay to dispose. In 2003, Goodwill Industries spent over \$40,000 to recycle broken computer equipment. Under the product stewardship scenario, the costs of recycling would already be covered, so the charities would not get stuck with the costs to handle the equipment they can't sell.

HB 2488 was passed by the House, but it was amended in the Senate and changed significantly. The bill is now a "study bill" requiring Ecology to work with the

state Solid Waste Advisory Committee to develop recommendations and is also directed to:

- Examine the need for and develop recommendations to address electronic waste collection, reuse, and recycling services, and financing options for charities, school districts, government agencies, and small businesses and to



- Give special consideration to costs incurred by charitable organizations receiving unwanted electronic products and possible pilot projects and other waste collection systems that could be developed to address these products and costs related to disposal.
- Report back to the Legislature by December 2004 and December 2005.

The environmental community, local governments and recyclers worked hard to keep this bill alive in the legislature this year. Although it does not include any product stewardship provisions involving manufacturers and is not as comprehensive as the original bill, it is a start. The research that will be conducted over the next two years will provide the opportunity to educate consumers and decision-makers about the significant environmental issues associated with electronic waste recycling and disposal and will recommend solutions to the problem.

Welcome H.O.M.E.!

If you need an outlet for usable but unwanted items and you don't want to throw them away...then King County's Household Online Materials Exchange (H.O.M.E.) is the place for you.

Here's how it works...click on <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/swd/exchange> and follow the links to learn more about the program, place an item for sale, look at what's for sale or free in a variety of categories, and give comments on your experience. Listing items

on the Online Exchange is not just limited to King County households; organizations in King County are also welcome to list items.

Categories include: appliances, automotive, books, children's items, clothing, computer hardware & software, furniture, gardening/landscaping supplies, home décor, electronics, movies, music, instruments, pet supplies, sporting goods, tools and more! Click on in today!

The Northwest Environmental Education Council Presents: 2004's NORTHWEST SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE

Mountaineers Conference Center
300 Third Avenue W, Seattle, WA

May 1, 2004 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
May 2, 2004 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

This conference is an opportunity to learn about recent developments in sustainability practices. Sessions will be presented by professionals and community organizers who have dedicated their lives to working for a more sustainable future. The goal of the conference is to provide practical information, methods and resources to empower attendees to live their lives and practice their work more sustainably.

This conference is intended for anyone interested in learning about, and connecting with others who are interested in creating, a more sustainable world. Sustainability Conference session topics include:

- Alternative Energy Sustainable Building Practices
- Sustainable Fisheries New Paradigms
- Sustainable Consumer Choices: Greening the Global Economy
- Environmental Films Urban Gardening/P Patches

- Co-Housing: Sustainable Business & Industry Practice
- Alternative Transportation: The US in the Global Context
- Sustainable Urban Planning/Simple Living
- Permaculture Native Landscaping/ Habitat Restoration
- Global Climate Change: Northwest Resources for Green Living
- Sustainable Food Supply: Safe Alternatives to Toxins in the Home

Registration: General admission is \$75 per day or \$35 per day for students and low income. Work exchange options are also available - please call or send us an email for more details. Register Online at http://www.nwetc.org/sust-400_05-04_seattle.htm. To request further information, call (206)762-1976 or email to info@nweec.org.



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